



National Transportation Bill Arrives

On the heels of the 12th short-term extension of the TEA-21 Transportation Bill, Congress passed and the President finally signed a new National Transportation Bill. The new bill dubbed SAFETEA-LU, which stands for "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users," was signed into law on August 10, 2005.

SAFETEA-LU is the largest surface

transportation investment in U.S. history at \$244.1 billion. It replaces TEA-21, which expired in 2003 but was kept alive through a series of short-term extensions. Ironically, our new six-year transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU, will expire in September 2009.

During the five-year authorization period (FY 2005-2009), SAFETEA-LU provides \$45.3 billion in guaranteed funding for transit. When the FY 2004 transit funds are included, the six-year bill amounts to \$52.6 billion, a 46% increase over the \$36 billion under TEA-21.

The general structure of the federal transit program is changed little by the new act. Most of the formula programs aimed at federal investment in systems and communities based on need remain intact with a few minor changes. Several new programs were added along with new

funding categories and some existing programs were restructured.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) hopes that changes brought about by the new act will encourage and reward A+ performance in the transit industry. The FTA also sees SAFETEA-LU as promoting 'common

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sense transit solutions.'

As stated earlier, many of the funding

programs remain unchanged. The formula program for Section 5310: Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities remains largely unchanged. However, the formula for Section 5311: Rural Transportation has slight modifications. Twenty percent of the Section 5311 funds are now distributed through a new tier-based formula based on land area. The remaining 80% of funds is allocated by the existing formula based on population in 'other-than-urbanized' areas.

Funding under the Urbanized Area Formula Grants has changed somewhat. Operating assistance for urbanized areas that grew to larger than 200,000 in population or became part of a larger urbanized area is grandfathered in phases - the act allows 50% of Section 5307 funding to be used for operating assistance in FY06 and 25% in FY07 and is then completely phased out in FY08. The

(Continued on page 6)

Newsletter Contents

National Transportation Bill Arrives
Page 1

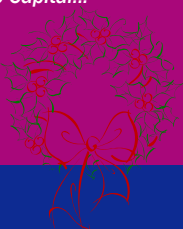
Notes From the Top
Page 2

Announcements & Events Calendar
Page 3

Spotlight Article
Page 4

DOTD On The Go
Page 5

From the Capital...
Page 8



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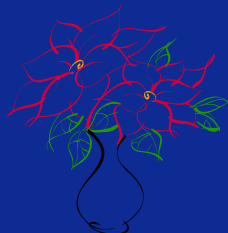
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Notes from the Top

It's been a year since we published our last newsletter... but oh what a year! We have new staff, a new National Transportation Bill, another cancelled conference, and, of course, the most significant change is a new transportation landscape in Louisiana that we are all adjusting to in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Many of our DOTD Public Transportation staff members have spent a majority of their time in the past several months dealing with issues related to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The following is a brief recap of our activities:

- We have been providing information to the Governor's office on a continuing basis.
- We developed a Statewide Plan, with assistance from our consultant Alliance Transportation Group, to provide emergency public transportation services to the 'transitional communities' being set up by FEMA. The funding for this effort is being provided by FEMA. More information will be provided soon.
- We have participated in coordinating the recovery efforts in New Orleans along with NORTA and CATS. As a result of this effort, there is a new daily express bus service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans called LA SWIFT and regular bus services have been restarted, on a limited basis, in New Orleans. The Canal and Riverfront Streetcar lines are expected to be in service soon, using the antique St. Charles streetcars.
- We also participated in coordinating a plan to address the huge increase in population and resulting demand for public transportation in Baton Rouge as a result of the New Orleans evacuees.

This effort resulted in a grant from FEMA to provide additional capacity in Baton Rouge and the LA SWIFT and New Orleans restart efforts.

Special thanks go to NORTA General Manager Bill Deville and CATS CEO Dwight Brashear. Within days of the recent catastrophic event, these managers pulled together to coordinate transportation for the massive influx of displaced persons in Baton Rouge and implement plans to rebuild transportation services in New Orleans. **DOTD Public Transportation Section appreciates the cooperation, perseverance, and assistance of these two gentlemen and their staff regarding the recovery efforts. We also appreciate the assistance and support of FEMA; the Federal Transit Administration, especially Region VI; and DOTD Secretary Bradberry and other officials in our recovery efforts.**

For more on these efforts, see the 'Spotlight' article on Page 4.



Our Annual Public Transit Conference was also cancelled in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. We will not reschedule the conference this fiscal year but are planning several workshops in 2006. The conference in the fall of 2006 is expected to be bigger and better than ever.

We have some wonderful and sad news to report concerning staffing. As most of you may already know, Anne Ladner, our Discretionary Programs Manager, retired in August 2005. We were all sad to see her leave, but are happy that she is enjoying her retirement. We are also pleased to announce her replacement, Daria West. With the JARC program being made a formula program in

(Continued on page 8)



Announcements

Seasons Greetings FROM THE DOTD PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STAFF

Events Calendar

APTA Conferences

Transit CEOs Seminar (formerly General Managers Seminar)
January 29-31, 2006 Long Beach, CA

Legal Affairs Seminar
February 5-7, 2006 San Francisco, CA

Marketing & Communications Workshop
February 19-22, 2006 Phoenix, AZ

TransITech Conference
February 22-24, 2006 Las Vegas, NV

Legislative Conference
March 5-7, 2006 Washington, D.C.

For more information: www.apta.com

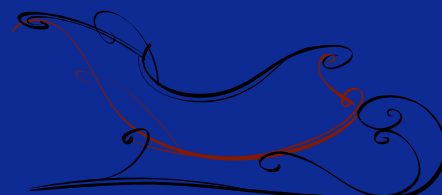
Other Upcoming Conferences/Training:

South West Transit Association
26th Annual Conference & Expo
January 22-24, 2006 Mesa, AZ
www.swta.org

TRB 85th Annual Meeting
January 22-26, 2006 Washington, D.C.
www.trb.org/calendar

United Motorcoach Association
January 18-22, 2006 Tampa, FL
www.ctaa.org/training/

2006 Railway Security Forum & Expo
January 33-31, 2006 Washington, D.C.
www.railwayage.com



NTI Courses:

TEAM-Web
January 9-10, 2006 Gaithersburg, MD

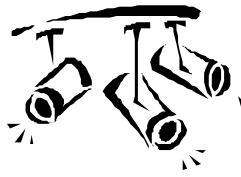
Paratransit Scheduling & Dispatching
Fundamentals
January 10-11, 2006 Glendale, AZ

Managing the Cost of ADA Paratransit
Services
March 14-15, 2006 Austin, TX

For information: www.ntionline.com

Transportation Safety Institute Classes
Courses are offered around the country on various topics throughout the year.
For more information, please visit:
www.tsi.dot.gov





Spotlight on...



Emergency Transportation Services for Hurricane Evacuees

The landscape of Louisiana has changed, literally and figuratively, in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The Louisiana we knew is no more and everyone is struggling to understand our new reality.

Pre-Katrina, the large and small urban transit systems were 'sized to fit' their particular areas. Most rural transit systems were already struggling to meet demand with limited resources. Katrina caused a mass exodus of the New Orleans area. What was once the largest population center in Louisiana is now spread throughout Louisiana and another 11 states.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the State of Louisiana are struggling to ensure that evacuees have a place to live until they can return to what is left of their homes in New Orleans. 'Transitional communities' are being set up across the State to move people out of shelters and in to more stable housing (usually travel trailers or mobile homes). These 'transitional communities' are located where there is available land.

Many of the former New Orleans residents are transit dependent. According to the US Census Bureau, in 2000, 27.8% of the households in New Orleans reported having no car (0 car households). Add to this the number of households that may have one vehicle and multiple people needing to

get somewhere and you have a large transit dependent population. Those needs were met by the various alternative transportation options available in the New Orleans Metropolitan area.

Now... take all of those transit dependent households and distribute them in communities across Louisiana without the same transit alternatives and you have the makings of a transportation crisis.

In addition, New Orleans is now and will be for the foreseeable future in reconstruction mode. Housing and transportation are major issues. People working in New Orleans are living in Baton Rouge. People who are returning to New Orleans need transportation.

New routes will be needed to access the transitional communities being set up by FEMA. Additional capacity will be needed in existing transit systems to provide access to jobs, medical care, shopping and the other essentials of daily life. This new transportation landscape created by the influx of people in communities across Louisiana has created new partnership opportunities for state, federal and local transportation providers. Three efforts are of particular note.

Statewide Transportation

To address the new transportation demand in communities across the

(Continued on page 7)



One of the DOTD Public Transportation (PT) Section's mandates is to provide information and technical assistance to transit providers in Louisiana to assist them in meeting their requirements for FTA funding. These activities come in many different formats and venues. DOTD provides numerous training courses, workshops, site visits, and training material as well as a web site and annual conference. To keep all of our constituents up to date on DOTD's activities, this section will feature just a few selected items each quarter.



Hurricanes Katrina & Rita

Of course all of the preceding pales in comparison to the events of the past three and a half months. The Annual Public Transit Conference scheduled for mid September was cancelled due to Hurricane Katrina. The Conference will not be rescheduled for this year, but next year's will be extra special.

The PT Section has been working tirelessly to meet the new transportation needs across the state caused by Hurricanes Katrina & Rita. DOTD has been assisting CATS and NORTA with a plan to meet increased demand in Baton Rouge and restart service in the New Orleans area with financial assistance from FEMA. The PT Section has also presented a plan to FEMA for statewide emergency transportation services for the many transitional communities being set up in the state. Both plans, which includes a daily commuter service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, have been funded.

United We Ride

The PT staff has been participating in a series of meetings aimed at better coordination of transportation services in Louisiana. The Governor's office applied for and received a United We Ride program grant from FTA. The Task Force adopted a Louisiana Action Plan for Statewide Transportation Coordination in early November. The next step will be to implement the plan.

Drug & Alcohol Program Site Visits

In early August, the FTA informed DOTD that it would audit three Rural Transportation Providers along with DOTD to ensure compliance with FTA program regulations. In addition to the on-going audits that DOTD conducts, Donna Lavigne, Michelle Horne, and members from Alliance Transportation Group, Inc. conducted site visits with St. Martin Council on Aging, Livingston Public Transit, and Plaquemines Public Transit to ensure compliance.

Due to Hurricane Katrina, FTA cancelled the scheduled audits until further notice. The FTA audits will be rescheduled sometime in 2006. However, DOTD and Alliance continue to perform scheduled site visits to ensure program compliance.



RTA Buses after Katrina

While both hurricanes delivered a serious blow to public transportation in Louisiana, the long-term effects will be great. Everyone is still getting used

to the new transportation landscape, literally and figuratively. We have seen new coordination and cooperation opportunities and seized them. New partnerships have been formed between CATS, NORTA, DOTD and the Department of Labor. We have started new services that were only considered as 'wish list' items in the past. A new Louisiana transportation system is being born out of the devastation. 🇺🇸



(Continued from page 1)

basic formula for urbanized areas has not changed but is augmented by two new formula features: 1) New Small Transit Intensive Cities for urbanized areas under 200,000 that provide more service per capital than do other comparable areas, and 2) New Growing States and High Density States, which does not affect Louisiana.

One of the new programs found in SAFETEA-LU is the New Freedom Program, Section 5317. This new program is meant to encourage services and facility improvements to address the transportation needs of persons with disabilities that go beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The New Freedom Program provides a new formula grant program for capital and operating costs directed at these activities.

The Job Access and Reverse Commute program is now a formula program and is codified under Section 5316. The new formula allocates 60% of the funding to recipients in areas with populations over 200,000, 20% goes to States for areas under 200,000, and 20% goes to States for non-urbanized areas. States are given the flexibility to transfer funds between urbanized and non-urbanized areas. An interesting addition to the program is a requirement that projects must be included in a locally developed human service transportation coordinated plan beginning in FY 2007.

Throughout SAFETEA-LU coordination is a key component. A locally developed, coordinated public transit human services transportation plan will be required for Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled, Section 5316 JARC, and Section 5317 New Freedom Program funding.

Throughout SAFETEA-LU coordination is a key component. The Human Service Transportation Coordination provisions in the act are aimed at improving transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with lower incomes by ensuring that communities coordinate transportation resources pro-


To assist in promoting coordination activities, there is a provision in SAFETEA-LU to fund Mobility Management with 80% federal funds.

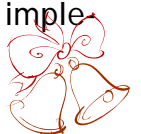
vided through multiple federal programs. The coordination provisions in SAFETEA-LU will impact several programs as early as 2007.

A locally developed, coordinated public transit human services transportation plan will be required for Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled, Section 5316 JARC, and Section 5317 New Freedom Program funding. The JARC requirements are effective immediately since they were part of TEA-21. As mentioned earlier, the other two programs will be funded only if they are part of a local coordination plan starting in 2007. There are provisions for the use of other federal funds as match with these programs and Section 5311 Rural Public Transportation to encourage coordination efforts.

To assist in promoting coordination activities, there is a provision in SAFETEA-LU to fund Mobility Management with 80% federal funds. Mobility Management consists of short-range planning and management activities and projects that are aimed at improving coordination among public transportation and other transportation service providers. This includes personnel and technology activities, but cannot be applied to operating public transportation services.

What does this mean for Louisiana? An overall increase in funding levels will enhance our ability to provide transportation services to Louisiana citizens. The new programs will offer opportunities to provide specialized services to targeted populations in the state. And coordination... Louisiana has been traveling down that road for some time.

Louisiana has had success with coordinating various federal program dollars in the past. The state recently completed development of a Louisiana Action Plan for Statewide Transportation Coordination as part of the United We Ride program and has applied for a follow-on implementation grant. 



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State, the DOTD Public Transportation Section has requested and received approval for funding for emergency public transportation services from FEMA. DOTD, with assistance from Alliance Transportation Group, Inc., developed a plan to provide funding to existing systems across the state for expanded emergency transportation services to people living in 'transitional communities.'

...DOTD Public Transportation Section has requested and received approval for funding for emergency public transportation services from FEMA.

The plan provides funding for emergency public transportation services from December 1, 2005 to February 28, 2006. The plan also states that additional funding may be requested if the demand is needed beyond that period. DOTD will be contracting with existing transit providers who are providing services to 'transitional communities' in their areas.

The funding will be available to any public transportation provider (urban, small urban, rural, or specialized provider) who is providing and can document transportation services to 'transitional communities.' This includes several transit agencies that will be providing feeder connections to the new LA SWIFT service.

LA SWIFT

Many of the Katrina evacuees landed in Baton Rouge nearly doubling the state capital's population. Since the reconstruction process began, many former residents checking on property damage and relief workers are living in Baton Rouge and traveling to New Orleans each day. In response to the huge demand for commuter services between Baton Rouge and New Orleans FEMA has funded, in cooperation with the Capitol Area Transit System (CATS) and the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA), a daily express commuter service, LA SWIFT. The service is being coordinated by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development

and the Louisiana Department of Labor.

LA SWIFT makes seven roundtrips per day seven days per week. This emergency bus service is designed to transport displaced New Orleans-area residents with no transportation from Baton Rouge to New Orleans and back for jobs, job searches, and similar recovery efforts. Since it is funded through a FEMA grant, the rides are free. Ridership has continued to increase and other areas have expressed interest in gaining access to the service.

There are daily feeder shuttles from one of the 'transitional community' sites on Groom Road outside of Baton Rouge. As mentioned above, other feeder connections are planned along the LA SWIFT route.



For more information on LA SWIFT, call 225/379-1232, or toll-free 1-877-4LADOTD (1-877-452-3683) or look it up on the web at www.laswift.com.

CATS/NORTA Expanded Service

With the huge influx of evacuees to the Baton Rouge area came a corresponding increase in demand for transit services. In addition to the increased demand CATS faced in Baton Rouge, NORTA was facing two daunting tasks - recover from the massive losses resulting from Hurricane Katrina and restart services in New Orleans for returning citizens and relief workers.

CATS and NORTA made contact with DOTD Public Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). FTA suggested that the two agencies approach FEMA for assistance. The FTA Region VI office also suggested that the two agencies work together on the challenges each faced. It was suggested that CATS could assist NORTA with its recovery efforts and at the same time, NORTA could provide assistance with CATS' increased demand.

(Continued from page 7)

The two transit agencies contacted FEMA and began developing a plan to deal with the challenges in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The "Emergency Public Transportation Plan" was conceived and presented to FEMA for funding. NORTA now temporarily shares an office with CATS. "It was a model of cooperation set forth by a number of agencies: DOTD and the Governor's office played key roles. CATS participation was outstanding," said William J. Deville, NORTA General Manager, about the experience.

"I think it's a great coordination opportunity. It'll help resolve some of the territorialism issues that are always present. It's forcing us to think outside the box."

The plan required about 160 buses. FEMA representatives suggested using FEMA-provided, out-of-state vehicles and operators. Since many of NORTA's personnel had lost their homes, the plan called for use of NORTA employees and those busses not damaged by flooding. FEMA agreed to this, and the search for additional busses started. FTA and the American Public Transportation Association helped by organizing a search for the additional buses. Houston, Detroit, and Atlanta came forward with the majority, and several other smaller organizations offered 5-10 each. John Calvin, a FEMA representative working in Baton Rouge said, "We developed a new method for sole sourcing a service need from local entities. They are more familiar with the needs of the area and the impact of the emergency. Anywhere we go we will be able to apply the same principle there." Calvin called it a blueprint for other transportation service coordination efforts throughout the state.

This situation presented an opportunity for change. Carol Cranshaw, Administrator of the DOTD Public Transportation Section said, "I think it's a great coordination opportunity. It'll help resolve some of the territorialism issues that are always present. It's forcing us to think outside the box." So far, the coordinated effort has been a huge success and reaping benefits in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and the whole state. 🇺🇸

(Continued from page 2)

SAFETEA-LU, you will all be hearing more from her in the future.

On a happier note, our own Emily Efferson, Transit Planner and Urban Systems Program Manager, was elected to the South West Transit Association (SWTA) board this year. SWTA's Board consists of an elected President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and 13 Directors (which includes only one State DOT Member). This is a great honor and accomplishment. I'm sure Emily will aptly represent the DOT's in the region. Congratulations Emily!

Congress and the President have finally given us a new National Transportation Bill, SAFETEA-LU. The act provides the largest guaranteed transit funding in our history. We are all reviewing the new act and its changes and will provide more information on the impact to our programs. For a quick primer, see the front-page article.

Finally, from all of us at the DOTD Public Transportation Section to all of you, we would like to send our wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year. 🇺🇸



From Capital Hill...

On the Friday before Thanksgiving, November 18, both Houses of Congress approved the Fiscal Year 2006 Appropriations bill for the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, and Independent Agencies. The bill provides a 12.3% increase in federal transit program funding over last year's amount. The total funding available for FY 2006 is \$8.590 billion, which is \$944 million more than last year. Once the President signs the bill, and he is expected to do so soon, FTA will publish its apportionment of funds within 10 days and FY 2006 transit funds will be made available. 🇺🇸